

September 12, 2013

RE: Review of Public Act 295 of 2008

Dear Representative Nesbitt and members of the House Energy and Technology Committee,

I write today to share my support for Public Act 295 of 2008 as a voter of the State of Michigan. I felt compelled to write today because this issue is of special importance to me. I feel very strongly that Michigan needs to continue to pursue aggressive advanced energy policy including renewable energy and energy efficiency standards for a variety of reasons including the economic benefits to the State, the financial benefits to Michigan tax payers and voters, National and local security benefits, and the environmental benefits of these rules.

There is no doubt in my mind that moving Michigan forward on energy, away from the energy sources that powered the last 100 years, toward the energy sources that will power the next 100 years is a strategy that is vital to the economic growth of our State. After College I watched many of my close friends leave Michigan in order to find work in other States. Several of my friends, very intelligent individuals with impressive degrees in future-focused fields, found work elsewhere in the renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors. The fact of the matter is a growing and dynamic industry like renewable energy and energy efficiency has created jobs in other States, like in Maryland, where a close friend of mine works as an energy systems engineer focused on smart grid technology. If Michigan wants to attract and retain our bright young people, and bright young people from all over America, a dynamic renewable energy industry is one good way to do that.

Secondly, as a young person, just out of college with significant college debt I worry about my ability to pay for the fundamentals of life on my new salary. Throughout my life I have watched energy prices bounce around from high to low, and back again, somehow always seeming to end even higher than they started. That kind of instability makes it hard for a young person to plan the bright future that I hope to have here in Michigan. On the other hand, if Michigan were able to lessen our dependence on fossil fuels that are so susceptible to the idiosyncrasies of market fluctuation and speculation towards more stable and affordable energy sources that would make my life easier, encouraging me to invest in my future. If others like me act the same way imagine the growth our State could enjoy, with a whole generation of young people living free of worries about energy security and wild fluctuations in the cost of energy.

Finally, one of my favorite parts of our great State is the beautiful environment. There is no doubt that Michigan won the natural lottery. However, presently, fossil fuels threaten our beautiful environment, like in the Enbridge Pipeline spill in the Kalamazoo River and the horrible piles of Pet Coke lining the banks of the Detroit River. On the other hand, renewable energy does not pose the same risks to my health and enjoyment of our natural environment. In addition to the natural beauty threatened by fossil fuels, I feel that the continuing legacy of fossil fuels, as a cause of severe and significant illness, including asthma among young people and water poisoning, is a burden to place on our most vulnerable citizens and a deterrent to young families, who are critical to the vibrancy and growth of this state.

For all of these reasons I urge your Committee to continue to push Michigan towards the future that we all want. A future that features vibrant and diversifying economic growth, stable and predictable utility prices, and the protection and preservation of our beautiful natural places for generations to come—and I feel that aggressively pursuing ambitious renewable energy standards is an important means to that end.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Tom Turner, Concerned Citizen from Detroit

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